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Letter dated 13 February 2007 from the Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I write in my capacity as Chairman of the Security Council Working Group on children and armed conflict established by resolution 1612 (2005).

At its seventh meeting, on 9 February 2007, the Working Group adopted its conclusions with respect to the report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in Burundi (S/2006/851 and Corr.1).

I should be grateful if this text could be issued as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Jean-Marc **de La Sablière**

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Annex to the letter dated 13 February 2007 from the Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

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Security Council Working Group on children and armed conflict Conclusions on parties to the situation of armed conflict in Burundi

1. At its 6th meeting, on 8 November 2006, the Working Group examined a report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in Burundi, introduced by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. The Permanent Representative of Burundi participated in the subsequent discussion.

2. The main elements of the exchange of views among the Working Group were the following:

- The Secretary-General's analysis and recommendations contained in the report met with a favourable response.
- The Permanent Representative of Burundi explained that his Government's strategy to improve the situation of children had been to focus, after 13 years of conflict that had torn the country apart, on the achievement of a peace agreement with Palipehutu-FNL and on the development of legislation and positive measures for child protection and education; he recognized that progress still had to be made in areas such as the implementation of legal and justice system reform, awareness on the rights of the child, and the fight against impunity; the Government of Burundi is determined to improve the situation, is open to dialogue with the United Nations on child rights, and hopes that the international community will continue to support activities in the field of children's disarmament, demobilization and reintegration.
- The Chairman summed up the discussion by recognizing that Burundi is at a crucial phase of its transition from conflict to peace. He stated that it is important for the Government of Burundi and the international community to work together to ensure that special attention is given to child protection in the process of demobilization, and that measures are taken to put an end to the culture of impunity.

3. Further to that meeting, the Working Group has agreed to the following:

(a) To appeal to the Government of Burundi and to the Palipehutu-FNL leadership to fully take into account the need to address specifically demobilization of child soldiers and child protection, in close consultation with UNICEF and the United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi, in the implementation of the Comprehensive Ceasefire Agreement.

(b) To share with the Peacebuilding Commission the information contained in the report of the Secretary-General and the conclusions of the Working Group, stressing the need for strategies:

- To address disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of child soldiers

- To raise awareness and support Government action to fight against sexual and other gender-based violence against children, ensure protection and access to justice of victims of such violence, and fight against impunity
- To improve training of police and other security forces in order to prevent violations and abuses of the rights of children by security forces
- To support the valuable work conducted by and strengthen the capacities of the administration office in charge of human rights, judicial authorities and the office of the military prosecutor in the protection of the rights of the child.

(c) Letter from the President of the Security Council to the Government of Burundi, expressing concern about the situation in the demobilization camp of Randa, as described in the report of the Secretary-General, the need to transfer immediately any remaining child soldiers to other facilities for swift release, and welcoming recent steps taken by the Government of Burundi in this regard.

(d) Letter from the Chairman of the Working Group bringing to the attention of United Nations agencies and donor Governments the need to support strengthened and accelerated implementation of sustainable disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes in Burundi, in close cooperation with civil society and local communities, paying particular attention in this process to separation of children from adults, and to girls exploited by armed forces and groups.

(e) To recommend the Secretary-General and the Security Council, when discussing issues concerning Burundi, to preserve and strengthen the framework in place for the protection of children, including its capacity to protect girls from rape and other forms of sexual violence.

(f) Letter from the Chairman of the Working Group to the Secretary-General welcoming the intention of its Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict to visit Burundi.